

Financial Literacy and Education Commission Meeting September 24, 2009

Welcome Remarks:

Michael Barr, the Assistant Secretary for Financial Institutions and Rosie Rios, Treasurer of the United States welcomed the Financial Literacy and Education Commission (the “Commission”) and the public. They reiterated the importance of financial capability and the Administration’s commitment to this issue. Assistant Secretary Barr highlighted the Commission’s initiative-in-progress—a new *National Strategy for Financial Capability*.

Then, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Financial Education, Ms. Michelle Greene, proceeded to share with the public the work of the Commission over the last months. The Commission had a day-long strategic planning meeting on July 1, 2009, in which all 20 member agencies participated. At that meeting, the Commission members agreed that a new strategic plan on financial capability is needed for this country and identified new areas of focus, including research and evaluation, outreach and communications, and development of core competencies. Members of the Commission were invited to elaborate upon their specific subcommittees.

National Strategy Working Group:

Ms. Jane Schuchardt, the National Program Leader at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Leader of the National Strategy Working Group, discussed the updates on the development of the new national strategy. Aiming to give direction for future financial education initiatives and building on *Taking Ownership of the Future: The National Strategy for Financial Literacy* (2006), the Commission will lead the development of the new *U.S. Roadmap to Enhancing Financial Literacy¹: An Updated National Strategy* (2010) which will set direction for financial literacy and education, research, practice and coordination with the collective goal of improving financial security for the diverse population of the United States.

Research and Evaluation Subcommittee

Mr. John R. Phillips, the Director of the Office of Policy Research at the Social Security Administration and Leader of the Research and Evaluation Subcommittee, summarized the subcommittee’s plan of action and overall objectives. The ultimate goal is to encourage multi-disciplinary financial education research and evaluation through advocating intervention design, coordinating member-supported research activities, providing access to research resources, and developing common metrics for evaluation. Reducing duplicative or ineffective interventions and increasing confidence in government sources justify the plan of action.

Core Competencies:

Luke Reynolds, Chief of the Outreach and Program Development Section at the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and Leader of the Core Competencies Subcommittee, discussed the progress in the development of the core competencies, which are the basic set of all knowledge

¹ This is a working title. Other terms, including competency and security, have been proposed to replace literacy. The title will be finalized as the roadmap/strategy is developed.

and skills needed at various ages and life events in order to make financial decisions in their best interest. Phase 1 of the project will consist of the following steps: 1) conducting a literature review of existing financial education studies; 2) providing a universal, concise, and clear definition for core competencies, and 3) conducting interviews with staff from Commission agencies, consumer advocacy groups, industry trade groups, researchers and others. Phase 2 consists of developing and implementing a communications plan to achieve consensus and widely disseminate the core competencies.

Communications and Outreach Group:

Ms. Nicola Kelly, Community Affairs Specialist at the Office of Thrift Supervision presented on behalf of Cheri Arnott, Social Security Administration Associate Commissioner of the Office of External Affairs and Leader of the Communications and Outreach Subcommittee. Ms Kelly revealed the Subcommittee's new plan which is divided into three key goals: 1) improve inter-agency communications; 2) revamp/re-design mymoney.gov website; and 3) increase public awareness of and interaction with the mymoney.gov resources and the hotline (1-888- My Money). Means of achieving the stated goals include developing a monthly "hot topics" internal newsletter by October 2009, designing a user-friendly and searchable website, and developing an effective marketing plan by early 2010.

Presentation by Diana Crossan, New Zealand Retirement Commissioner:

The invited featured speaker was Ms. Diana Crossan, the New Zealand Retirement Commissioner. She presented on the New Zealand's financial literacy national strategy which was led by the Retirement Commission and included the input of many individuals and organizations across the public, private and voluntary sectors. Launched in May 2008, the National Strategy included concepts such as maximizing outreach, allowing flexibility, achieving a cultural fit, extending delivery, and revamping the New Zealand Curriculum.

Ms. Crossan also discussed the importance of getting the information into the hands of the stakeholders through various communication vehicles such as printed materials and online tools. For example, the Retirement Commission's website, **sorted.org.nz**, has been ranked among the top five government websites of New Zealand; the website has totaled over 4.5 million views, exceeding the population of New Zealand itself. In addition, a multimedia campaign was conducted including a television series that targeted the youth population.

Conclusion:

The closing remarks of Ms. Greene, centering on the progress made towards enhancing national financial literacy and the challenges that still await, adjourned the Commission public meeting.

Next public meeting is on January 20, 2010.